

Enquiries to: Mr Robert Hunt  
Contact Phone: [REDACTED]  
Our Ref: SF2563

15 July 2019

Local Government Election Cost Review  
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART)  
PO Box K35  
HAYMARKET Post Shop NSW 1240

## **Re: Review of Local Government Election Costs**

Dear Tribunal Members,

Nambucca Shire Council, at its Ordinary Meeting held 11 July 2019, when considering the Tribunal's Draft Report on the Review of Local Government Elections resolved to make a brief submission to you noting the following points;

1. It was noted in the Terms of Reference on Page 72 of the Report that the purpose of the review is to "minimise the financial burden on councils and ratepayers". A proposed 61% increase in cost from the 2016 Council election does not appear to be reducing any burden on Council or its ratepayers and is some \$39,000 greater than what the NSWEC proposed for the 2020 election.
2. Council has allowed \$160,000 in its 2020/21 Budget for the election which would be sufficient to cover the proposed NSWEC estimate of \$153,000 (page 77 of the Report). However, if the IPART recommendation is adopted Council will have to find an additional \$32,000 from its scarce resources.
3. If the IPART recommendations are to proceed, Council requests that they commence at the 2024 election to allow Council to set aside additional funds in an Election Reserve. Alternatively, the Local Government Cost Index, which informs the rate peg increase for 2020/21, should include an allowance for the increased cost of elections as alluded to on Page 53 of the Report.
4. The proposed removal of the NSW State Government subsidy represents another example of cost shifting to Local Government. What is the State Government proposing to do with the increased funds it will hold? Will it be used to reduce the burden on tax payers? If not, then taxpayers will still be paying for the operating costs of the NSWEC as well as paying additional costs as a ratepayer for the cost of elections. This is not "minimising the burden of councils and ratepayers" as stated in Point 1 above.
5. There are other ways of minimising costs of elections to ratepayers and councils such as compulsory postal voting or through electronic means rather than have voters physically attend polling booths – perhaps IPART could recommend to the NSW State Government that it should also research alternative methods of voting.

Should you require any further details please do not hesitate to contact me on [REDACTED]

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]  
Robert C. Hunt  
**Assistant General Manager Corporate Services**